



The beauty of lives that generate hope (Pope Benedik XVI, 03/02/2007)

Every encounter with Christ demands a profound change of attitude, but for some, as it was for you, the Lord's request is particularly demanding: you are asked to leave everything, because God is all and will be all in your lives. It is not merely a question of a different way of relating to Christ and of expressing your attachment to him, but of an option for God that requires of you constant, absolute and total trust in him.

Conforming your own lives to the life of Christ by entering into this words, conforming your own life to the life of Christ through the practice of the evangelical counsels, is a fundamental and binding feature which, in its specificity, demands the concrete and binding commitment of "mountaineers of the spirit", as venerable Pope Paul VI called you (1970).

The secular nature of your consecration brings to the fore, on the one hand, the means you use to fulfil it, that is, the means proper to every man and woman who live in ordinary conditions in the world, and on the other, the form of its development, that is, a profound relationship with the signs of the times which you are called to discern personally and as a community in the light of the Gospel. Your charism has been authoritatively recognized several times precisely in this discernment in order for you to be a workshop of dialogue with the world, that "experimental workshop in which the Church ascertains practical ways for her relations with the world" (Paul VI, 1976).

The enduring timeliness of your charism derives precisely from this, for this discernment must not take place from outside reality but from within it, through full involvement. This takes place in the daily relationships that you can weave in family and social relations, in professional activity, in the fabric of the civil and ecclesial communities.

The encounter with Christ and the act of following him, which impels and opens people, "must necessarily be reflected 'ad extra' and expand naturally" in an encounter with one and all, for if God fulfils himself only in communion, it is also only in Trinitarian communion that human beings are fulfilled. You are not called to establish special forms of living, of apostolic commitment or social intervention, but rather, forms that can come into being through personal relations, a source of prophetic riches. May your lives be like the yeast that leavens all the dough (cf. Mt 13: 33), sometimes silent and hidden, but always with a positive and encouraging outreach capable of generating hope.

The place of your apostolate is therefore the whole human being, not only within the Christian community - where the relationship materializes in listening to the Word and in sacramental life from which you draw to sustain your baptismal identity - I say the place of your apostolate is the human being in his entirety, both within the Christian community and in the civil community, where relationships are formed in the search for the common good, in dialogue with all, called to witness to that Christian anthropology which constitutes a sensible proposal in a society bewildered and confused by its multicultural and multireligious profile.

You come from different countries and the cultural, political and even religious situations in which you live, work and grow old are different. In all of these situations, may you be seekers of the Truth, of the human revelation of God in life. We know it is a long journey, distressing at the present time, but its outcome is certain. Proclaim the beauty of God and of his creation. Following Christ's example, be obedient to love, be men and women of gentleness and mercy, capable of taking to the highways of the world, doing only good. May yours be a life that is focused on the Beatitudes, that contradicts human logic to express unconditional trust in God, who wants human beings to be happy.



The Church also needs you to give completeness to her mission. Be seeds of holiness scattered by the handful in the furrows of history. Rooted in the freely given and effective action with which the Lord's Spirit guides human events, may you bear fruits of genuine faith, writing with your life and your witness trajectories of hope, writing them with the actions suggested by "creativity' in charity" (John Paul II, *NMI*, 50).



Thoughts from Don Rinaldi

- ❖ In recollection, in interior silence, the voice of God is heard, and the consecrated soul is formed.
- ❖ Do all possible good, according to the spirit of Don Bosco.
- ❖ Take care of the interior life; have a good spirit, without getting worried or worrying about success.
- ❖ Love the Lord and, in the love of the Lord, love your neighbour. It is the true carrying out of consecrated life.
- ❖ A deeply humble and meek person willingly gives himself to others, sacrifices himself generously, loves Our Lord more perfectly.
- ❖ When we obey the arrangements that God has made for us, day by day, we do God's Will.
- ❖ Life is to work. The one who lives works; when one does nothing, one dies.
- ❖ Stay united together in the same spirit, and you will understand each other more easily.
- ❖ Sweetness (gentleness) in looks, in the dealings, in words: conquer everyone with goodness.
- ❖ Jesus shed all his blood in obedience to the Father, and to save humanity. Jesus, our model, was obedient to the point of death, and death on the cross.
- ❖ • We must not expect to do extraordinary things in matters of the spirit. Be simple like children.
- ❖ Piety is like food, and it is the first thing that is given to the creature. It is the food of Christian life, therefore we must not stop feeding it, so that the spiritual life does not fail in us
- ❖ The essence of true piety is, Holy Communion, good works and, better still, the imitation of the one we want to honour: Mary Most Holy.
- ❖ You do not have a habit, but you must have a religious spirit, because the Lord looks at the heart and not at the exterior.

2021: The Centenary of the death of Don Albera; and the 90th anniversary of that of Don Rinaldi.

The Salesian Congregation and the whole (Salesian) Family will remember next year the figure of Don Paolo Albera, Don Bosco's second successor: little Don Bosco, as he was called in France. A man of fine spiritual sensitivity, a model of love for Don Bosco, a teacher of Salesian virtues, deepened under the magisterium of Saint Francis de Sales of whom he was a great admirer and imitator.

The VDB will also remind Don Rinaldi, 90 years after his death, intensifying the study of his spirituality and the invocation of the Lord for his speedy canonization.

Spirituality Days on line

The world situation of the pandemic has driven the Secretariat of the Salesian Family to organize the Salesian Spirituality Days online. They will take place on the 15th, 16th and 17th of January. It is expected that all the Regions of the Salesian world can participate. To register, contact the Provincial Delegate of the SDB Salesian Family in your province. It is a precious opportunity to listen to the Salesian heartbeat of all the Groups that make up the Salesian Family.

Consecrated Secularity in the Salesian Family.

Usually, when we talk about Consecrated Secularity, we refer to the Volunteers of Don Bosco (VDB) and the Volunteers With Don Bosco (CDB). But there are two other groups of consecrated seculars within the Salesian Family: the Daughters of the Queenship of Mary (DQM), founded in Bangkok (Thailand) in 1954; and The Disciples (DISC), founded in Chattisgarh (India) in 1973. Furthermore, there are consecrated lay people among the Witnesses of the Risen One, Canção Nova and the Contemplative Fraternity of Mary of Nazareth. Together they bear witness to the beauty of the consecrated secular life lived in a Salesian way.

Consecrated secularity: a form of consecrated life to learn from.

What is it? The radicality of a choice of a Love, driven by a profound need that the Spirit arouses in consecrated persons. A deep intimacy with the Lord, the Spouse, and the friend of the soul. A heartfelt life of communion with the brothers, the ecclesial community and the human community. Fidelity to daily life. A true poverty. Listening to the heartbeat of the world. A commitment to continuous Formation. Conforming to the mystery of the incarnate Christ with all its consequences. The experience of contributing as lay people to the consecration of the world. This is consecrated secularity: a form of life, if lived, with radiant beauty.